

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-20

AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-14 ACDA-12 /115 W

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R 201530Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8026

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 5005

E.O. 11652 : NA

TAGS : PGOV, PDEV, PINT, NI

SUBJ : OBASANJO ADDRESS TO CA

REF: LAGOS 4919

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF OBASANJO'S ADDRESS TO CA ON

APRIL 19:

"MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL, CHAIRMAN AND
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY,

"THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL HAS WATCHED WITH INCREASING
CONCERN THE RECENT EVENTS IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
WHICH HAD SLOWED DOWN THE PROGRESS AND MARRED THE CORDIAL
ATMOSPHERE OF UNDERSTANDING AND TOLERANCE WHICH EARLIER
CHARACTERISED THE WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY.

"IN MY ADDRESS TO YOU AT THE INAUGURATION OF THIS ASSEMBLY,
I TOOK PAINS TO REMIND YOU OF TWO VITAL ISSUES: THE UNPLEA-
SANT POLITICAL PRACTICES OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC AND THE ROLE
OF A NEW CONSITUTION IN ACCOMMODATING OUR NATIONAL DIFFERENCES
AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS. IN THAT SPEECH, I WANRNE
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THAT QUOTE: THOSE ELEMENTS IN OUR NATIONAL LIFE WHICH
FAILED US AND LED TO NEAR DISSOLUTION OF THIS GREAT
NATION ARE ONCE MORE ONLY A STONE-THROW AWAY AND MUST
BE TAMED AND FRESH IDEAS AND APPROACHES SUBSTITUTED
IN THEIR PLACE FOR THE GOOD OF ALL AND TO SERVE THE
NATIONAL INTEREST IN UNDILUTED AND UNEQUIVOCAL
TERMS". UNQUOTE.

"I ALSO REMARKED THAT THOSE OF YOU IN WHO THE NATION HAS SHOWN ITS FAITH AND CONFIDENCE DO NOW HAVE A UNIQUE AND GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NATION'S FUTURE. ADDITIONALLY, I ADVISED THAT YOU SHOULD AT ALL COST PREVENT A SLIP TO THE WAYS OF THE PAST.

"FROM THE REPORTS REACHING THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL, IT WOULD NOT BE WRONG TO SAY THAT THOSE REMARKS WERE NOT MUCH HEEDDED BY ALL MEMBERS AND EVENTS, ACTIONS AND UTTERANCES OF SOME MEMBERS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY ARE POINTING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE LAST SEVENTEEN YEARS REPEATING ITSELF. YOU MUST CONTINUE TO BRING ADEQUATE TOLERANCE, ACCOMMODATION AND MATURITY TO BEAR ON YOUR DELIBERATIONS.

"THE AIM OF SETTING UP THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS TO ENABLE IT TO WORK OUT A MEANINGFUL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH NIGERIANS CAN CARRY OUT THEIR AFFAIRS WITHOUT HATRED BASED ON RELIGION, ETHNIC AFFILIATIONS OR LANGUAGE. THE EYES OF THIS NATION AND INDEED THE WORLD ARE ON YOU. YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO DISAPPOINT THE NATION.

"YOU ALSO HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT YOUR ACTIONS AND UTTERANCES IN THIS ASSEMBLY HAVE DIRECT EFFECT ON OUR PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY FOR GOOD OR FOR ILL
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IN OUR MOST ARDUOUS TASK OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND NATIONAL UNITY. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST CIVIL WAR AND, PERHAPS MORE, THE HEARTACHES AND TRAGIC INCIDENTS THAT PRECEDED THAT HOLOCAUST, PARTICULARLY THE SWEAT AND DEATHS IT HAS COST TO HAVE GONE SO FAR, IS, I THINK, A SUFFICIENT REMINDER. IN THE PROCESS OF FASHIONING A WORKABLE CONSTITUTION, THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL DELIBERATELY DEvised A SYSTEM WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT CAPABLE AND MATURE NIGERIANS ARE ELECTED AND SELECTED TO BRING ABOUT SUCH A DOCUMENT.

"IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THAT CONFIDENCE CAN YET BE RETRIEVED. FURTHERMORE, MILLIONS OF OUR CITIZENS HAVE ALSO ENTRUSTED TO YOU THE WISDOM TO BRING ABOUT A DOCUMENT THAT WILL ENSURE PEACE, PROGRESS AND STABILITY IN THEIR BELOVED COUNTRY. AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, YOU ARE, OF COURSE, EXPECTED TO ABIDE BY THEIR WISHES PRINCIPAL AMONG WHICH IS THE CONTINUED PEACE AND HARMONY THROUGHOUT THE NATION.

"LET ME SAY THAT CONFIDENCE AND TRUST OF OUR PEOPLE IN YOU MUST NOT BE SHAKEN OR BETRAYED. BUT BY YOUR ACTIONS, ATTITUDES AND UTTERANCES, SOME OF YOU ARE

MAKING BOTH TO HAPPEN BECAUSE YOU HAVE EITHER FAILED TO SUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROMOTING DIVISIONS IN THIS COUNTRY OR YOU LACK THE WILL, THE EXPERIENCE, AND WHEREWITHAL OF A GOOD STATESMAN RATHER THAN A POLITICIAN. PERSONAL FEELINGS AND SECTIONAL INTERESTS SHOULD NOT OVER-RIDE THE NEED TO FASHION A CONSTITUTION THAT WILL BE FLEXIBLE AND WORKABLE AS WELL AS GUARANTEE THE EXISTENCE OF OUR GREAT NATION.

NOTE BY OC/T: MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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"OUR PROSPERITY AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS DEPEND ON OUR HARMONY, STABILITY AND UNITY WITHIN OUR BORDERS. AND OUR EFFECTIVENESS ABROAD DEPENDS ON OUR POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION AT HOME. WE MUST NOT ALLOW OUR ENEMIES TO EXPLOIT OUR WEAKNESSES TO OUR DETRIMENT.

" IT IS OUT OF OUR GREAT CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY AND THE WELL-BEING OF THE ORDINARY CITIZEN OF THIS NATION THAT WE ARE HERE THIS MORNING. YOUR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WOULD MAKE YOU REALISE THAT IN THE EVENT OF A BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER AND CHAOS AND DISORDER ENSURING IT WILL BE THE COMMON PEOPLE WHO WILL SUFFER MOST. THOSE OF YOU WHO UNDERSTAND THE REAL MOTIVE BEHIND YOUR ACTIONS, ATTITUDES AND UTTERANCES WILL FLY INTO SAFETY AND USE THE COMMON MAN AS CANNON FODDER AS IF THEY WERE EXPENDABLE ITEMS FO SELF AND SELFISH INTEREST. AND WHEN THE DUST IS SETTLED YOU WILL EMERGE

UNSCRATCHED. THE COMMON MAN MAY IN DUE COURSE KNOW
BETTER.

"YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO ALLOW THE PRESENT GOLDEN
OPPORTUNITY FOR LAYING A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE POLITICAL
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FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY TO SLIP. THEREFORE, IN THE
NAME OF NIGERIA AND ALL NIGERIANS WHO LOVE PEACE AND
LOVE THIS COUNTRY, IN THE NAME OF WHAT IS DEAREST
TO EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU, AND IN THE NAME OF
THAT APPEAL TO ALL OF YOU TO COMTINUE YOUR DELIBERA-
TIONS ON THE DRAFT CONSITUTION IN THE ATMOSPHERE
OF HARMONY AND CONCURD AND IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE,
TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO RETURNING THIS COUNTRY TO
CIVIL RULE IN 1979 AND ALSO ENSURING THAT PEACE
AND TRAQUILITY REIGN SUPREME IN A POLITICALLY
UNITED AND ECONOMICALLY STRONG NIGERIA.

"THANK YOU."
WYMAN

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